



ASHFIELD

Franklin County



[NARRATIVE](#)
[GEOGRAPHY](#)
[GOVERNMENT](#)
[DEMOGRAPHICS](#)
[HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS](#)
[TRANSPORTATION](#)
[CULTURE AND RECREATION](#)
[MISCELLANEOUS](#)



NARRATIVE

Narrative

Ashfield is a 40 square mile town in the Berkshire foothills in the southwestern corner of Franklin County. The town was originally named Huntstown in 1736 as a land grant plantation, but was incorporated under its present name in 1765 under the auspices of Lord Thurlow of Ashfield, England.

From about 1812 to 1830, Ashfield was a center of the peppermint industry and by 1825 several hundred acres of peppermint were under cultivation, yielding up to forty pounds of oil per acre at a value of nearly \$8 per pound. Other small industries during the 19th century included pottery making (an exhibit of which is at the Smithsonian Institute), production of wooden medical splints, a creamery and several sawmills, gristmills, woodworking mills, tanneries and maple sugaring. Of these, only maple sugaring continued to flourish and Ashfield has become well known for its maple products.

For decades, Ashfield was a quiet farming community with dozens of dairy and apple farms dotting the hillsides and lowlands. In the past 40 years, however, several farms have disappeared and the open fields and pastures have returned to wooded areas. It is only in the last 20 years that more people have been moving to Ashfield than leaving it. Lured by the cool breezes and the scenic vistas, people from all walks of life have moved from the cities. These bankers, attorneys, artisans, craftspeople, writers, artists, tradesmen, technicians and others have turned Ashfield into a cultural center.

Through all the years, the common theme has been that "small is better" and that Ashfield's role in the world is to be a haven from the world.

(Narrative supplied by community)



GEOGRAPHY

Location

Western Massachusetts, bordered by Goshen and Cumington on the south and southwest, Plainfield on the west, Hawley on the northwest, Buckland on the north, and Conway on the east. Ashfield is 20 miles southwest of Greenfield, 21 miles north of Northampton, 109 miles west of Boston, and 175 miles from New York City.

Total Area: 40.42 sq. miles

Land Area: 40.30 sq. miles

Population: 1,715

Density: 43 per sq. mile

Climate

(National Climatic Data Center)

(Cummington Hill Station)

Normal temperature in January.....19.9°F

Normal temperature in July.....67.3°F

Normal annual precipitation.....46.0"

U.S.G.S. Topographical Plates

Ashfield, Goshen, Shelburne Falls, Plainfield

Regional Planning Agency

Franklin County

Metropolitan Statistical Area

(1993 Definition)



GOVERNMENT

Municipal Offices

Main Number: (413) 628-4441

[Telephone Numbers for Public Information](#)

Form of Government

Board of Selectmen

Administrative Assistant

Open Town Meeting

Year Incorporated

As a town: 1765

Registered Voters (Secretary of State 1994)

	Number	%
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Total Registered 1,087

Democrats 253 23.3 % Republicans 175 16.1 % Other parties 1 0.1 % Unenrolled Voters 658 60.5 %

Legislators

[Senators and Representatives by City and Town](#)



DEMOGRAPHICS

Table DP-1. Profile of General Demographic Characteristics: 2000

Geographic Area: Ashfield town, Franklin County, Massachusetts

[For information on confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, see text]

Subject	Number	Percent	Subject	Number	Percent
Total population.....	1,800	100.0	HISPANIC OR LATINO AND RACE		
SEX AND AGE			Total population.....	1,800	100.0
Male.....	883	49.1	Hispanic or Latino (of any race).....	8	0.4
Female.....	917	50.9	Mexican.....	3	0.2
Under 5 years.....	95	5.3	Puerto Rican.....	1	0.1
5 to 9 years.....	120	6.7	Cuban.....	1	0.1
10 to 14 years.....	141	7.8	Other Hispanic or Latino.....	3	0.2
15 to 19 years.....	115	6.4	Not Hispanic or Latino.....	1,792	99.6
20 to 24 years.....	46	2.6	White alone.....	1,746	97.0
25 to 34 years.....	176	9.8	RELATIONSHIP		
35 to 44 years.....	301	16.7	Total population.....	1,800	100.0
45 to 54 years.....	428	23.8	In households.....	1,800	100.0
55 to 59 years.....	99	5.5	Householder.....	741	41.2
60 to 64 years.....	70	3.9	Spouse.....	412	22.9
65 to 74 years.....	107	5.9	Child.....	500	27.8
75 to 84 years.....	77	4.3	Own child under 18 years.....	404	22.4
85 years and over.....	25	1.4	Other relatives.....	38	2.1
Median age (years).....	41.8	(X)	Under 18 years.....	14	0.8
18 years and over.....	1,372	76.2	Nonrelatives.....	109	6.1
Male.....	645	35.8	Unmarried partner.....	61	3.4
Female.....	727	40.4	In group quarters.....	-	-
21 years and over.....	1,322	73.4	Institutionalized population.....	-	-
62 years and over.....	247	13.7	Noninstitutionalized population.....	-	-
65 years and over.....	209	11.6	HOUSEHOLD BY TYPE		
Male.....	98	5.4	Total households.....	741	100.0
Female.....	111	6.2	Family households (families).....	501	67.6
RACE			With own children under 18 years.....	236	31.8
One race.....	1,772	98.4	Married-couple family.....	412	55.6
White.....	1,752	97.3	With own children under 18 years.....	173	23.3
Black or African American.....	11	0.6	Female householder, no husband present.....	68	9.2
American Indian and Alaska Native.....	2	0.1	With own children under 18 years.....	47	6.3
Asian.....	6	0.3	Nonfamily households.....	240	32.4
Asian Indian.....	-	-	Householder living alone.....	178	24.0
Chinese.....	2	0.1	Householder 65 years and over.....	61	8.2
Filipino.....	-	-	Households with individuals under 18 years.....	249	33.6
Japanese.....	4	0.2	Households with individuals 65 years and over.....	155	20.9
Korean.....	-	-	Average household size.....	2.43	(X)
Vietnamese.....	-	-	Average family size.....	2.90	(X)
Other Asian ¹	-	-	HOUSING OCCUPANCY		
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander.....	-	-	Total housing units.....	821	100.0
Native Hawaiian.....	-	-	Occupied housing units.....	741	90.3
Guamanian or Chamorro.....	-	-	Vacant housing units.....	80	9.7
Samoa.....	-	-	For seasonal, recreational, or		
Other Pacific Islander ²	-	-	occasional use.....	51	6.2
Some other race.....	1	0.1	Homeowner vacancy rate (percent).....	1.4	(X)
Two or more races.....	28	1.6	Rental vacancy rate (percent).....	1.3	(X)
<i>Race alone or in combination with one</i>			HOUSING TENURE		
<i>or more other races: ³</i>			Occupied housing units.....	741	100.0
White.....	1,778	98.8	Owner-occupied housing units.....	584	78.8
Black or African American.....	13	0.7	Renter-occupied housing units.....	157	21.2
American Indian and Alaska Native.....	16	0.9	Average household size of owner-occupied units.....	2.52	(X)
Asian.....	14	0.8	Average household size of renter-occupied units.....	2.10	(X)
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander.....	1	0.1			
Some other race.....	6	0.3			

- Represents zero or rounds to zero. (X) Not applicable.

¹ Other Asian alone, or two or more Asian categories.

² Other Pacific Islander alone, or two or more Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander categories.

³ In combination with one or more of the other races listed. The six numbers may add to more than the total population and the six percentages may add to more than 100 percent because individuals may report more than one race.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000.



HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

Housing Information: (Units, occupancy, value, structure type, year built, etc.) -
[U.S. Census Bureau Tables](#)

Home Sales (Banker & Tradesman) -

[Town Stats - Free market Statistics](#)

Residential Building Permits (New single and multi family; monthly, YTD & historical) -
[U.S. Census Bureau Tables](#)

Subsidized Housing Units (DHCD 1998)

[DHCD Subsidized Housing Inventory](#)

Subsidized Housing Units: The number of housing units which count toward the municipality's 10% goal for low- and moderate-income housing. It includes both subsidized affordable units and market rate units in certain eligible subsidized developments.

Public Housing Units (DHCD 1999)

Conventional State:	0
Conventional Federal:	0

Rental Assistance(DHCD 1999)

State (MRVP:	0
Federal (Section 8):	0



TRANSPORTATION

TRANSPORTATION AND ACCESS

The major axes of transportation in Franklin County, where Ashfield is located, are State Route 2 and Interstate Route 91, which follows the Connecticut River. The region is well-served by rail. The Springfield Terminal Railway lines (the former Boston and Maine Railroad) parallel the two major highways, and the Central Vermont Railway's main line passes N-S through the eastern portion of the county.

Major Highways

Principal highways are State Routes 116 and 112.

Rail

There is no passenger or freight rail service available, but the network of intermodal facilities serving Massachusetts is easily accessible.

Bus

Ashfield is a member of the Franklin Regional Transit Authority (FRTA). There is no fixed route service, but FRTA provides limited paratransit services for the elderly and disabled through the Shelburne Council on Aging.

Other

The Turners Falls Municipal Airport, a General Aviation (GA) facility, is accessible from Ashfield. It has a 3,013'x 75' asphalt runway. Instrument approaches available: Non-precision.



CULTURE AND RECREATION

LIBRARIES

[Board of Library Commissioners On-line Library Catalog](#)

(American Association of Museums)

Ashfield Historical Society
P.O. Box 61
457 Main Street
Ashfield, MA 01330
(413) 628-4541

MUSEUMS

RECREATION

[Telephone Numbers for Public Information](#)

Recreational Facilities (Recreational sites and activities)

[Department of Environmental Management Recreation Section](#)



MISCELLANEOUS

HEALTH FACILITIES

(Dept. of Public Health 1992)

Hospitals

None

Long Term Care

None

Hospices

None

Rest Homes

None

UTILITIES

[Telephone Numbers for Public Utilities](#)

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NOTE: The COMMUNITY PROFILE draws information from a diversity of sources. The main source of information is listed under each section. In some instances comments submitted by the municipality were incorporated to correct and/or enhance the information obtained from the main source. However, no changes were made to those data bases which must be consistent throughout the state. DHCD has made efforts to ensure the accuracy of all data in the COMMUNITY PROFILES, but cannot take responsibility for any consequences arising from the use of the information contained in this document.